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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 16, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLAY HIGGINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HIGHER HOPES FOR PROFESSIONALS AROUND THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, we can only imagine what the President and Sean Hannity talk about every night on the phone. The two TV hosts have a lot to discuss, I am sure.

Maybe they talk about their mutual lawyer, Michael Cohen, and what he might or might not have in his files that could incriminate one or both of

them. Or maybe they just discuss their mutual admiration for Russian dictator Putin.

We can be reasonably sure that neither of them spends too much time discussing things they have done for which they are ashamed or things they have done or said for which they should apologize.

All of that blathering this past week about whether the White House or the President would apologize for comments by a White House staffer about a gravely ill American war hero, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, was just wasted breath, if you ask me. In our President, we have someone who does not ever apologize or regret something he or his staff has done, no matter how egregious.

This week, the White House is not alarmed that a senior staff made light of Senator MCCAIN's illness and life expectancy but, rather, that the comment about the former prisoner of war, an American hero, was made public.

Clearly, someone on the White House staff who heard the comment knew it was wrong—just wrong. Moreover, they recognized the comment was emblematic of the attitude at the White House, from the President on down, and thought the Nation and the world should know about it.

But it was the leak of accurate information from inside the White House that raised the ire of the President, not the fact that someone said things really awful about a true American hero.

We should know by now that this President and his henchmen do not apologize:

Tweeting racist videos from right-wing British groups? Nah, no apology.

Booting able-bodied Americans who want to serve their country out of the military because they are transgender? Not even.

Bragging about sexually assaulting women by grabbing their private parts? Well, he came close to apologizing, but not really.

Some speculate that being unapologetic is just the President's brand. He is brash, and he says mean things and doesn't back down because doing so would make him look weak, and revealing his weakness in public is clearly among the President's greatest fears.

The President and his late night phone buddy, Sean Hannity, remember? They complained about the last President being too apologetic.

But looking tough to cover up a fear of inferiority is only one explanation for why this President does not apologize. He often doesn't apologize because he thinks he was right in the first place, like when he said there were good people on both sides of the Nazi rally in Charlottesville where a woman was murdered by racist KKK extremists.

The President is not going to apologize, and not because it would make him look weak in the case of Charlottesville, but because he believes what he said was true: Nazis and the rest of Americans, the same.

He will never apologize for his founding campaign sin: calling immigrants rapists and criminals. In fact, he is basing a broad anti-immigration and anti-immigrant policy agenda on the bedrock belief that crime and the skin color of a person are synonymous.

This puts everyone around the President in a difficult position. Do they point out the emperor's nudity or do they praise his new suit? His chief of staff, remember, was dispatched to tell a Black Member of Congress that she was lying about how the President treated a soldier killed in action until the chief of staff was shown to be lying, himself, about what the Congresswoman said.

In the end, the American people knew what they were getting with this President, and a minority—not the majority of Americans, but a minority—still elected him to the White House

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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anyway. But the American people are learning important lessons about the President's enablers at the three most important branches of the Republican Party: at the White House, in the Congress, and at FOX News.

We know the President doesn't lose sleep wrestling with the moral implications of his behavior, but all of us had higher hopes for the professionals around the President—expectations which were apparently too high, indeed.

One thing is sure: this country owes a great debt to Senator JOHN MCCAIN, and our thoughts and prayers are with him, even if the President's thoughts are somewhere else.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

IRAN HOSTAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last week all Americans were relieved when three of our own citizens were released and returned home from North Korea. We are happy for them, for their families, and we rejoice in their reunification.

However, Mr. Speaker, this success only serves as a reminder that we have American citizens and legal permanent residents being unjustly detained elsewhere around the world, particularly in Iran. We know that the Iranian regime has played this game of detaining citizens from the U.S. and Western nations in an effort to get political and financial concessions from us. They hold these folks hostages, use them as bargaining chips, destroying lives and families in the process.

Last year, my south Florida colleague and ranking member on our subcommittee, the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, TED DEUTCH, and I held a hearing titled: "Held for Ransom: The Families of Iran's Hostages Speak Out." We heard from Doug Levinson, the son of Bob Levinson, who has been missing in Iran since 2007—11 years. Bob is the longest held civilian hostage in America's history. He is also a constituent of TED's, and I know that Congressman DEUTCH has worked tirelessly over the years to do whatever he can to bring Bob home and to reunite him with his family.

We also heard from other individuals—Babak Namazi, whose father and brother have been unjustly detained by the Iranian regime. I have met with Babak many times, and my heart just breaks each one of those times, especially when we hear of Americans being freed from North Korea while Baquer and Siamak, his father and brother, linger in Iran's prison.

And our subcommittee also heard from Omar Zakka, son of Nizar Zakka, a U.S. legal permanent resident and

hostage of the Iranian regime. Nizar has gone on hunger strikes about a dozen times since first being detained in 2015.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the Iranian regime used the news of the freed Americans from North Korea as a means to torture their hostages. The mental, physical, and psychological abuse that these individuals must be undergoing is beyond comprehension.

The White House has said that this is a priority: to release all unjustly detained persons in Iran—not just American citizens and U.S. legal permanent residents, but all foreigners who are unjustly detained.

President Trump spoke about how this would not happen if he were President, so it is time for President Trump to make that a reality. He can start by urging our European friends, some of whom have citizens detained in Iran as well, to make this more of a priority for them as well and to condition any further talk on the release of all prisoners. We have to increase the pressure using all levers that we have, and we have to bring these brave individuals home.

I was pleased to see President Trump announce his intent to appoint a special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs earlier this week. This is a positive first step, Mr. Speaker. It signals an intent to make a more concerted effort to bring these Americans home.

For the sake of Nizar and his family, for the sake of Baquer and Siamak and their families, for the sake of Bob Levinson and his family, and for the sake of Princeton graduate student Xiyue Wang and his family, and for all the Americans and other foreigners being held in Iran, we need to make this a priority. We need to secure their immediate release.

SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY FOR AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the situation we are currently facing regarding the House version of the farm bill.

The House farm bill, traditionally, for over 40 years, is one of the most bipartisan things that we do here in Congress, Democrats working with Republicans throughout the various regions of America. This is the third farm bill that I have had the opportunity to participate in, working together.

So where are we today? We are exactly where we should not be. We are facing a vote this week on a partisan farm bill that is both, in my view, bad policy and divides us even further as a country. This bill does not promote or demonstrate the successful programs, I think, necessary to strengthen our trade in the agricultural sectors across the country.

America trades throughout the world, and our agricultural economy is

dependent, in large degree, on our ability to produce more food than we can consume; and, therefore, trade becomes very important.

American agriculture needs a farm bill that supports and promotes not only trade, but, now perhaps more than ever with looming escalation of a trade war sparked by the administration's efforts with steel and aluminum, we see tariffs taking place on a host of products grown in the Midwest—sorghum, corn, and wheat—and in California potential increases in beef and pistachios and almonds. So that doesn't fare well.

This version of the farm bill also does not adequately support the dairy safety net. Of course, our dairy economy is big throughout the Midwest and in California, actually, the largest dairy State in the Nation. Nor does it do enough for our specialty crop farmers who grow the fresh fruits and vegetables that are a part of a healthy diet. California grows half of the Nation's fruits and vegetables.

This bill also proposes to make changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, otherwise known as SNAP, which will likely devastate parts of the food program that are working well. This, after all, is America's safety net, and we have a lot of not only children and elderly, but people who are disabled who depend and rely on these important food nutrition programs.

We do all believe that able-bodied people should be working, and all of us have the same goal in ensuring that those able-bodied people are self-sufficient. If we want people to become self-reliant, let's give them a SNAP program that does just that.

We have 10 pilot projects in 10 different States that are working, and they are to report back next year on what best works to get able-bodied people working and what doesn't work. But this proposal in this House version is doomed to failure, and the House CBO has scored it accordingly. Instead, it will likely cause our SNAP education to create training programs that will collapse, costing billions of dollars, creating a new Federal bureaucracy that was never given a chance to succeed.

We should not be in this position, Mr. Speaker.

Where should we be? We should be working together, as we have with previous farm bills, Democrats and Republicans, deliberate, negotiating, and, yes, even disagreeing over ideas and approaches, but coming together with important compromises.

The farm bill is America's food bill. It is also a national security item. People don't think about it that way, but the ability to produce all for America's dinner table every night the most healthy, nutritious food in the world is a national security issue, I believe.

Therefore, we must support our food security and safety for our fellow Americans. Our Nation's food policy must feed Americans and ensure our